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(Start Belt #9)

the thing that needs to be realized here is that county official salaries may only be raised once every four years, county official salaries may only be raised at the beginning of each elective term and this is why we have to do a four year jump at one time. The state has been involved in this question in various ways, prior to 1953 the state legislature set all salaries and of course the disadvantage of this was that they couldn't recognize the varying work load and various size counties within a specific class. Between 1953 and 1961, the state played no role, the county boards were solely responsible for setting salaries and of course here they found that many county boards did not set realistic salaries. Since 1961, the state legislature has set minimum salaries and has given the county board absolute freedom to go above these minimums, to reflect varying work loads, to reflect larger size counties and so on. I think that this is by far the wiser approach and this is the approach that we are taking here. Simply setting a minimum salary and allowing the county board to go ahead and set whatever salary they choose above that minimum. The minimum of course is to protect county officials in those counties where salaries would be abnormally low. There has been some question raised as to why twenty five percent, and of course, the thing I want to emphasize here is that we have been running a pretty constant five percent inflation for the past four years, and we have every expectation of keeping close to that again. This means that we are talking only about a very minimal upgrading when we say twenty five percent. The other question is why should the legislature have any responsibility in this question at all, and I think this was an issue which we address ourselves to when we voted on LB 12, and we are saying that it is the concern of the legislature to set standards for fair and equitable government for all people in Nebraska. Mr. President I move that LB 74 be advanced to E&R initial.

SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes Senator DeCamp, then Senator Dickinson.

SENATOR DECAMP: Mr. President, members of the legislature. In the committee I suggested that possibly the twenty five percent increase was unreasonable in that it was inflationary and was too big an increase at one time. I full well recognize the fact that the raise occurs only every forty, four years, excuse me, every four years, and there is some problem here. But rather than have these monstrous increases that are presented to the legislature, and that then get cut in half or one thing or another happens, I think we should adopt a system that looks to the future and tries to set a reasonable increase each year as the cost of living goes up. Now Senator Stromer and I were discussing this, and we thought an amendment could be prepared to the effect that it would give a ten percent increase possibly now, and at the future would have a controlled factor of the cost of living each year that the county board would be allowed to increase at their option, and so I would like to know whether Senator Stromer has any amendments prepared on this?

SPEAKER: Senator Stromer.

SENATOR STROMER: Mr. President, first of all I would like to ask Senator Anderson a question?

SENATOR ANDERSON: I yield to a question.

SENATOR STROMER: Is the problem a statutory requirement on the fact, I mean I too realize that we cannot change the salaries every four years, or is it constitutional?

SENATOR ANDERSON: To my knowledge it's statutory.